

Stages and Utah Performance Assessment System for Students

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) because:

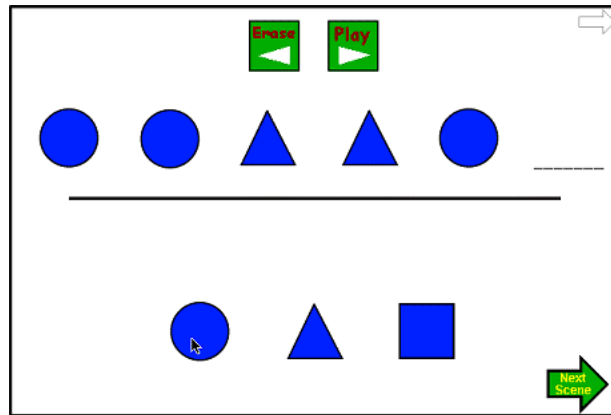
- 1. Stages activities align with Utah's Alternate Assessment (UAA) performance indicators.**
- 2. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- 3. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

1. Stages activities align with Utah's Alternate Assessment (UAA) performance indicators.

Stages can be a tool for learners with special needs to demonstrate progress even if they cannot take the regular assessment with accommodations or modifications. The content covered in Stages activities also includes mathematics and reading topics at a range of levels. The learner's IEP team can also use Stages to help determine whether or not alternate assessment is appropriate by providing informal benchmarks of learner progress in Mathematics and Reading/Language. Please refer to the section, "How Stages Correlates with Utah Alternate Assessment" for detailed matching with the alternate assessment performance indicators.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product as a benchmark. At the end of each activity, a report with instructional data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructor may wish to then print that screen, save the screenshot, or save the information as a text-format electronic file as examples of student work for portfolio evidence collection.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

2. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include real-life community settings.

3. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Utah alternate assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive benchmark tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable information on learner skill achievement, determine assessment strategy, and discover the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with the Utah Alternate Assessment [UAA]¹

Life Skills Objectives and Performance Indicators

Lifelong Learning

8. Communicates acceptance and/or rejection.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: All Activities

Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Explore Letter ID and Letter Sounds

Math Readiness: Explore Number ID and Counting, Create Patterns
Explore Colors, Explore Shapes

Stage Five: *Reading:* Explore Letters (Alphabetize), Explore Meaning

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Explore: Telling Time, Using Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects

- The learner can independently select a preferred activity or item to explore from onscreen choices using various input devices. Learner choices are recorded in report data. Choices appear in context of scenes in some activities, and independently (on a white screen) in other activities.

9. Activates cause/effect device (e.g. Switch, interactive toy, door access button).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: Press and Hold, Press and Release

- Using Stage One, the learner can demonstrate use of switch control in preparation for use of an appropriate communication device (cause-effect). In *Press and Release*, each activity presents a simple animation to the student and keeps a count of the number of device activations the student makes in response to a auditory, visual, or multisensory (combined auditory and visual) prompt. The *Press and Hold* series of activities records the number and duration of sustained activations of the device.

10. Discriminates between or identifies objects or pictures or words.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: *Object Identification:* Animals, Toys, Food

Category Identification: Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

- In Stage Three *Object Identification*, the learner is presented with an object and is then asked to choose the same object from a choice of two or three objects on the screen. In *Category Identification*, the learner identifies items belonging to given categories.

11. Makes choices.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Explore:* Telling Time, Using Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects

- In Stage Six *Explore* activities, the learner is presented with several objects on the screen. The learner activates any object in order to hear and/or read about that object.

¹ Information from the Utah Core Alternate Assessment Handbook and Specific Directions for Administration, 2000. Utah State Office of Education. Source: <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/sars/altassess/default.htm> (Accessed August 21, 2002).

21. Identifies objects/pictures/words/Braille Math facts.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Object Identification: Animals, Toys, Food

Stage Five: Reading: Meaning

- In Stage Three *Object Identification* activities, the learner is shown an array of pictures, and is asked to identify a named picture.
- In Stage Five *Meaning*, the learner is asked to identify the picture that illustrates the meaning of a given word.

23. Completes computer activity.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: Press and Hold, Press and Release

- Using Stage One activities, the learner can demonstrate appropriate use of a device. The learner's instructor can also use these activities to select the most effective device for the student. Choices for device include touchscreen, mouse, switch, and alternate keyboard (e.g., IntelliKeys).

26. Uses telephone.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Number ID (Telephone and Elevator)

- In these activity, the learner can demonstrate mastery of numerals 0 through 10 as a prerequisite for telephone dialing and other daily activities. Numbers are presented in the context of a telephone keypad and elevator lights. The learner is asked to select the spoken number.

27. Identifies/corrects errors.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Letter Scramble, Making Words

- These Stage Five activities present the learner with a puzzle to solve. The *Letter Scramble* activity gives the learner three chances to unscramble letters that make up a word. *Making Words* asks the learner to form as many words as possible using the letters S-T-R-I-P-E.

Collaboration

1. Plays with toys appropriately.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Tic-Tac-Toe

- In this accessible version of the classic turn-taking game, the learner can play against the computer or a peer.

3. Matches objects to pictures and/or words.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Reading: Meaning

- The learner is presented with a set of Dolch words at one of five levels (Pre-Primer, Primer, First Grade, Second Grade, Third Grade) and identify the item in the scene that illustrates the meaning of the word.

4. Demonstrates number concepts.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math: Counting

- In this activity, the learner is asked to count up to 10 objects on the screen. An accessible number line is provided.

6. Demonstrates money skills (e.g. money identification, making change, budgets money).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess: Money Orientation, Money ID*

- Stage Six introduces coins and paper money by their names and values. The learner is asked to identify coins up to \$.25 and bills up to \$20.

7. Demonstrates time management skills (e.g. start/finish/break, tells time, access transportation).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess: Telling Time*

- Both digital and analog clocks are included in the *Telling Time* activities.

Effective Communication

1. Uses nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, pronouns.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences: Spelling and Grammar*

- Stage Seven *Spelling and Grammar* activities include Spelling, Homonyms, Capitalization, Noun-Verb Agreement, Pronoun Use, Word Order, and a custom sentence option for other proofreading and editing skills.

Responsible Citizenship

6. Identifies survival signs.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess: Recognizing Signs*

- Stage Six *Recognizing Signs* presents the learner with community signs to identify in the context of real-life scenarios.

Employability

7. Completes a writing task (e.g. letters, sentences, math problems).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences*

Making Stories

- Using Stage Seven *Building Sentences*, the learner can write message without requiring keyboard typing skills. The learner who is able to use an onscreen accessible keyboard, regular keyboard, or alternative keyboard can write sentences in response to instructor-written prompts in *Writing Sentences*. Using *Making Stories*, the learner can write multiple sentences with the aid of a photograph or imported graphic as a prompt.